

Regional Assessment of Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area
 Meeting Notes: East Coast Environmental Law
 Date: April 30, 2026

REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF OIL AND GAS EXPLORATORY DRILLING IN THE CANADA-NOVA SCOTIA OFFSHORE AREA

MEETING NOTES - Participant Engagement Session

Date: April 30, 2026, 10:30 -11:00am

Location: Virtual

Attendees:

RA Team - C. Burgess, A. Walter, C. Coghill

Participants:

East Coast Environmental Law – M. Kofahl, T. Northrup

Key Discussion Points	
Scope and approach of the RA, including timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The RA was agreed to by the Minister after a request from the province of Nova Scotia. IAAC will lead the RA and collaborate with NS Department of Energy, the CNSOER and NRCan. - The proposed Study Area boundaries are based on the Strategic Environmental Assessments that CNSOER has completed. - Early engagement with Indigenous Peoples was initiated in February with Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO), Millbrook First Nation and Sipekne'katik First Nation. Early engagement has also taken place with other participants and government departments. - The timeline is short. Currently we are expecting the comment period for the draft Terms of Reference to be mid-May for a 20-day comment period, and for the RA to enter the conduct phase in early July with a draft report in the fall with a 30 day comment period and a final report to the Minister in December. - Engagement is planned to increase throughout the summer but there are no public open houses planned. June to September will be the primary months for engagement. - IAAC won't be making information requests to government departments as the information requested for the NS Offshore Wind RA is still applicable. - The focus of this RA will be identifying mitigation measures, including new mitigation, and key gaps. - The RA Team is looking at bringing in experts to address a gender-based analysis assessment and cumulative effects assessment, this work will begin in June.
Potential for exclusion regulation and follow-up program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the RA request, the province noted that an exploration regulation be considered as part of the RA. The RA team will be reviewing the 5-year review of the exclusion regulation that was implemented after the NL RA.

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Key Discussion Points	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A recommendation for a follow-up program is a possibility for regional assessments but unknown for this RA at this time.
Cumulative effects expertise and consideration of “downstream” cumulative effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The RA team will likely have to go out for a bidding process for this expertise. If ECEL is aware of someone with expertise in this area please let us know. - Incorporation of the climate context and climate change is a topic that we would like to address in the RA. The scope of work around this and the link with cumulative effects is under development. IAAC will schedule a follow-up meeting to further discuss this topic.
Technical Advisory Groups/Advisory Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This RA will not be incorporating Advisory Groups or Technical Advisory Groups. - It is expected that an expert on oil and gas exploratory drilling will be contracted to provide support to the RA Team.
ECEL Comment – <i>The RA needs to be transparent with the meetings that are being held and share the meeting minutes publicly. It is beneficial to hear what the other groups have to say.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted. - The RA Team will be posting meeting minutes and summaries of the meetings to the RA Registry. - The RA Team is also open to holding virtual sessions with experts and/or key groups with expertise of the offshore to gather feedback and knowledge. - FAQs will also be developed and shared on the Registry throughout the RA to help answer some key questions about the RA, exploratory drilling, exclusion regulations etc.
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participant funding will be available for the planning and conduct phases of this RA. - Notices for funding for the planning phase went out last week (to Indigenous peoples) and this week (to non-Indigenous groups).